## THE WEATHER OF 1944 IN THE UNITED STATES

By J. L. Baldwin

[Weather Bureau, Washington, D. C.]

THE year 1944 was notable for its unusually destructive storms. Hurricanes, tornadoes, straight-line winds, hail and floods caused enormous losses. Farm work received a serious setback by a wet spring in large areas, but more favorable weather followed in most sections. Droughts prevailed in mid-Atlautic areas, most of the Ohio Valley and in the far West.

At the beginning of the year cold and wet weather was

At the beginning of the year cold and wet weather was prevailing over most of the South, while most central and northern States were unusually warm for the season and extremely dry, until the closing days of January when abnormally heavy rain or snow occurred in the Great Plains and a large north-central area. Buds had begun to swell as far north as Minnesota. All-time January maximum temperature records were broken in many extreme north-central States, while it was abnormally cold in the Great Basin of the West. It was the driest January on record in Montana. A severe glaze storm on the 13th and 14th did \$18,000,000 damage, mostly to timberland, in eastern Texas and northwestern Louisiana.

Mild weather continued in most sections east of the Rockies until the second decade of February when an extensive cold wave brought sub-zero readings into the northern interior, with -43° at Golva, N. Dak., on the 11th and freezing southward to west-central Florida on the 13th. Heavy snow, which preceded this coldness, afforded ample protection to winter crops in most northern areas. This in turn was followed by a return to above normal warmth during the latter part of the month and new high February temperature records were established in extreme northern interior areas around the 26th. It rained or snowed on at least half of the days in Tennessee, a new record.

March was cold, cloudy, and abnormally wet over the greater portion of the country. Some States south of the Ohio Valley received 3 times their normal amount of precipitation. It was the wettest March of record in South Carolina and Georgia. Spring farm work became from 2 to 4 weeks behind normal quite generally east of the Rockies. A severe hailstorm, with stones up to 3 inches in diameter caused \$3,000,000 damage at Memphis, Tenn., and adjacent areas.

April was a month of disastrous floods in the Southeast, the Great Plains and middle Mississippi Valley. Excessive rains in areas where rivers were running near bankful produced crests near and in some cases exceeding record crests of 1943. The Mississippi crested at St. Louis Mo., on April 30 at 39.1 feet exceeded only by the flood of 1844 when 41.4 feet was reached. Rainfall at St. Louis, Mo., was the greatest April total since 1893 and Peoria, Ill., had the wettest April in its history. It was the wettest April in Utah on record. In Nebraska subsoil moisture was fully restored for the first time since the drought years of 1934 and 1936. Farm work was further delayed. Heavy hail did nearly \$3,000,000 damage to the fruit crop in California, and peaches in the South suffered from early freezes.

Floods continued in some areas in May, especially in Iowa. The Mississippi rose to the highest stage ever recorded from Keokuk, Iowa, to Hannibal, Mo. It was

the wettest May in the last half century in the North-Central States and unusually heavy rains fell in the western Cotton Belt. The month became exceptionally cold, with freezing almost to the Ohio Valley, on the 5th and 7th, followed by unusual warmth. It was the warmest May of record in Pennsylvania.

June was characterized by above normal temperatures in practically the entire region east of the Rockies, extreme dryness in most sections from the central Mississippi, Ohio, and Potomac Valleys to the Gulf and Rio Grande Valley, and unusually heavy precipitation from the western Lake region westward. It was the wettest month that ever occurred in Montana and the wettest June on record in Wyoming, while the Norfolk area of Virginia was suffering from its most severe drought in history. Tornadoes, straight-line winds, thunderstorms, and hail killed over 200 people and destroyed over \$25,000,000 worth of crops and property during this month.

During July the drought continued in a large area, extending from the eastern Lake region, Pennsylvania and New Jersey to Texas, while unusually we's weather prevailed from Kansas to Minnesota. Tennessee reported the driest and warmest May to July period in its climatic history

By August the drought had become one of the worst in years in much of the Ohio Valley. In southern Illinois rainfall for the previous 2 months was only 25 percent of normal, which represented an actual water deficiency of about 70,000 tons for every 100-acre farm in that area. Heavy rains fell in the south Atlantic and Gulf coastal plains and quite generally from southern Texas to Minnesota and the Dakotas. This caused considerable delay in harvesting and threshing grain in the Northern Plains and some deterioration resulted, especially in the Red River of the North Valley. It was the wettest summer on record in Minnesota. On the 26th, hailstones covered parts of Denver, Colo., to a depth of 5 to 6 inches and caused damage estimated at \$1,000,000. Hailstorm damage in Montana alone for this month approximated the unusual loss of \$10.500,000.

September will be remembered as the month of the great Atlantic hurricane, the severity of which was comparable with that of 1938. This storm affected 900 miles of the East coast from Hatteras northward. Maximum wind velocities equaled or exceeded all previous records at Hatteras, Cape Henry, Atlantic City, New York, and Block Islaud. The highest velocity recorded by instrument was 134 miles per hour at Cape Henry, Va. A total of 390 lives were lost including marine fatalities, and property losses approximated \$100,000,000. Precipitation was unusually heavy from the Texas coast to northern Florida and from Tennessee and North Carolina to Maine. Many September high temperature records were broken in the Pacific Northwest.

Another important hurricane visited our East coast in October, striking the Southwest coast of Florida and moving northward through the Carolinas and Virginia with rapidly diminishing intensity. Most of the damage was therefore confined to the Southeast, particularly Florida, where heavy loss of fruit occurred. In this State 18 lives were lost and the crop and property damage was

estimated to be \$63,000,000, on the 18th and 19th. Wind velocities in excess of 100 miles per hour were recorded during this storm.

November was generally a quiet month. Near the end of the month the first general subzero temperatures of the season occurred in the north-central area where minima

as low as 15° below zero were reported.

Temperatures dropped to 30° below zero over extreme northern sections during December and the first really widespread snows and blizzards of the winter occurred. Cold weather penetrated the deep South causing considerable damage, and truck losses in Florida were heavy. On the 27th and 28th an extensive area of moderate glaze covered much of the region from northern Texas and the Mississippi Valley eastward.

Some sections of Pennsylvania, northern Ohio, West Virginia, and adjoining areas reported the greatest total December snowfall on record and in a few cases a nearrecord for an extended period of snow cover, while accumulations in the far West were considerably below normal.

## TEMPERATURES

The mean temperature for the year 1944, derived by weighting the averages for the varying areas of the several States, was 53.2° or the same as the average for the 1886 to 1944 period, during which time the highest mean annual temperature was 55.6° in 1921 and the lowest 51.8° in 1917.

Monthly and annual State temperature departures are presented in table 1, supplemented by a chart showing

the annual distribution areally.

Yearly temperatures averaged generally from 1° to over 2° above normal in the far northwestern border districts, elsewhere from the western portion of the Great Plains to the Pacific coast they were mostly below normal, especially between Wyoming and southern California. It was generally warmer than normal for the year in the

remaining portion of the country. Departures averaged 2° above normal in a large northern interior area.

The highest State yearly average was 70.8° for Florida and the lowest 39.5° for North Dakota. The greatest monthly average was 83.8° for Texas during July while the lowest was the February average of 11.2° for North Dakota. The latter value was considerably higher than in 1943 when the lowest State average for the country was -1.4°, which also occurred in North Dakota, during

January.

## PRECIPITATION

The average annual precipitation for the country as a whole, based on weighted averages, was 30.38 inches. or 1.31 inches more than the average for the 1886 to 1944 period, during which time the wettest year was 32.74 inches in 1915 and the driest 24.65 inches in 1910.

Figure 1 gives the percentages of normal precipitation by States for 1944; figure 2, the percentages for the growing season; table 2, the percentages for the months and the year; and table 3, the monthly and annual amounts. The areal distribution of annual precipitation is shown in percentages by chart.

Precipitation for the year was much below normal from the Ohio Valley to southern Michigan, in the Pacific Northwest, some far southwestern areas and southern Florida.

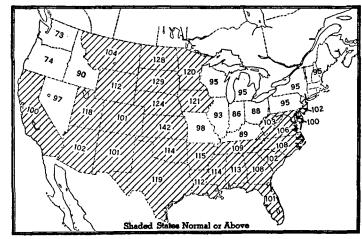


Figure 1.-Percentage of normal precipitation, 1944.

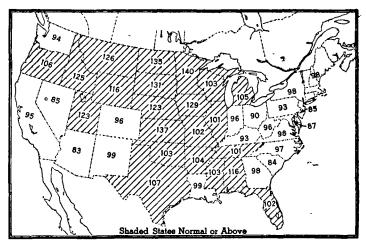


FIGURE 2.—Percentage of normal precipitation, April 1-September 30, 1944.

It was considerably above normal in a large area extending from Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota southward to Texas, thence eastward to Georgia and northern Florida.

On a State basis, annual precipitation exceeded its normals by about 5 to 15 percent in the Cotton Belt and by about 15 to over 40 percent in the Western Plains and adjacent areas. The deficiencies were greatest in Washington, Oregon, and from the lower Ohio Valley to Lake Erie.

On an annual basis, the wettest State was Louisiana with 61.79 inches. Other States averaging over 50 inches of precipitation for 1944 were Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Tennessee. During 1943 Louisiana with 51.73 inches, was the only State to exceed 50 inches. The driest State, as is usually the case, was Nevada with 8.61 inches.

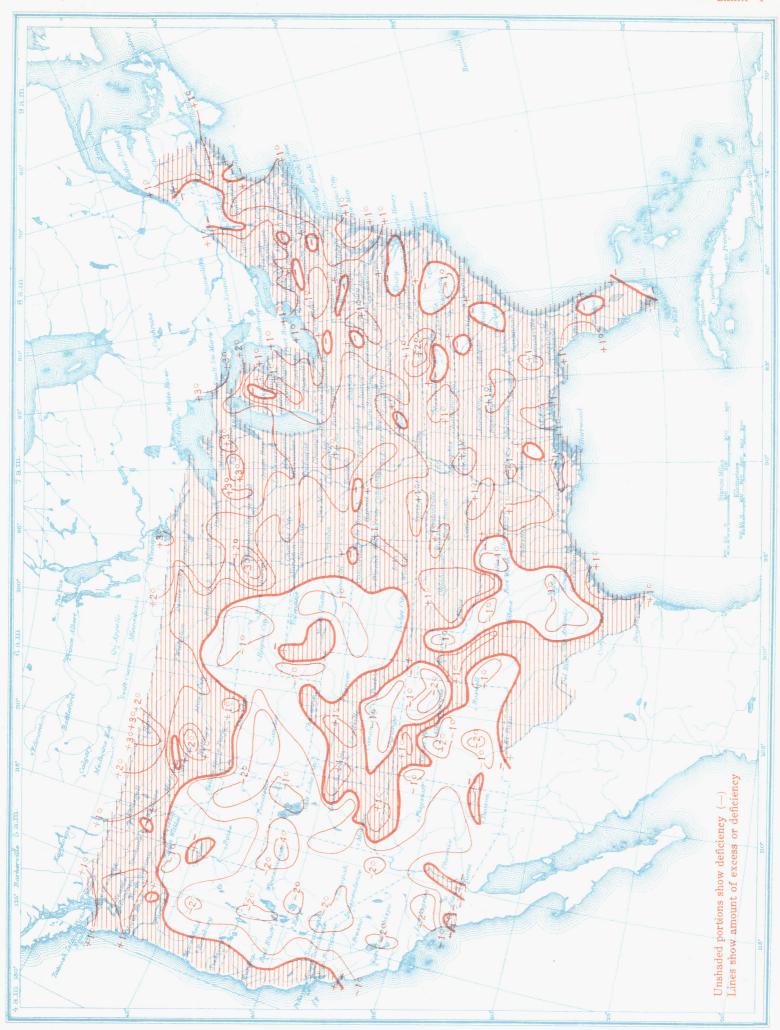
During the April to September growing season average State values show that more than the usual amount of precipitation was received in the greater portion of the country extending from Oregon and Utah to the western Lakes and thence southward to Texas and the Gulf, with totals exceeding the normals by 20 to over 40 percent in the western Plains and northern interior. Seasonal precipitation averaged 15 percent below normal for Arizona, Nevada, South Carolina, and New Jersey.

Table 1.—Monthly and annual temperature departures from normal for the year 1944

GA-4-	January	February	March	April	Мау	June	July	Atamant	September	October	November	December	Annual
State	January		March	Aprii	May	June	July	August				December	Aimusi
Alabama Arizona Arkansas California Colorado	+0.6	+6.8	+1.7	-0.6	+1.7	+2.8	-0.2	-0.2	+0.8	-0.6	+0.6	-1.2	+1.0
	-1.4	-2.9	-3.6	-3.6	-1.3	-4.1	-1.0	+0.6	+0.6	+2.4	-2.9	+0.9	-1.4
	+1.0	+4.5	-1.1	-1.4	+1.1	+2.0	+0.6	-0.1	-0.5	+1.1	+1.4	-4.8	+0.3
	+0.7	-2.0	-0.2	-3.0	-0.1	-4.3	-2.7	-0.6	+1.7	+1.5	-3.2	+1.0	-0.9
	-0.8	-0.2	-3.2	-4.2	+0.9	-0.9	-0.7	+1.0	+0.8	+2.7	+0.1	+0.3	-0.4
Florida	-1.6	+5.2	+2.7	+1.7	-0.1	+2.1	-0.3	+0.1	+1.7	-1.8	-0.8	-3. 0	+0.5
Georgia	-0.6	+5.9	+0.6	-1.0	+1.2	+2.5	-1.2	-1.1	+0.4	-1.0	-1.0	-3. 4	+0.1
Idaho	-2.4	+0.3	-3.6	-1.1	+1.0	-2.7	-1.8	-1.9	+1.5	+4.7	-1.9	-1. 6	-0.8
Illinois	+5.5	+3.7	-3.5	-1.9	+4.8	+3.7	-0.3	+0.9	+0.2	+0.3	+2.9	-6. 0	+0.9
Indiana	+4.5	+4.0	-2.5	-1.0	+5.6	+3.9	+0.5	+1.6	-0.2	0.0	+1.8	-5. 6	+1.0
lowa	+11.4	+4.2	-4.2	-3.8	+4.4	+2.0	$\begin{array}{c c} -2.0 \\ -1.8 \\ +0.4 \\ +1.3 \\ +0.7 \end{array}$	-0.4	+0.4	+2.0	+4.0	-3.6	+1. 2
Kansas	+4.5	+3.1	-4.1	-5.4	+2.5	+1.5		0.0	-0.5	+1.6	+2.5	-2.3	+0. 1
Kentucky	+1.9	+5.2	-1.0	-0.5	+4.5	+3.6		+0.4	-1.6	-0.9	+0.1	-4.7	+0. 6
Louisiana	-1.3	+6.1	+0.3	-0.3	-0.2	+1.9		+0.8	+0.6	-1.6	+0.7	-2.9	+0. 4
Maryland and Delaware	+1.7	+3.2	-2.3	-1.1	+5.4	+1.8		+0.7	+0.6	-1.3	-0.1	-2.4	+0. 6
Michigan	+6.8	+3.4	-2.9	-3.2	+4.5	+1.8	$\begin{array}{c c} -0.4 \\ -1.9 \\ +0.5 \\ -0.5 \\ -2.3 \end{array}$	+2.4	+0.4	-0.6	+3.0	-3.5	+1.0
Minnesota	+13.5	+2.8	-4.0	-3.1	+2.8	+0.7		0.0	-0.7	+2.0	+5.1	+0.7	+1.5
Mississippi	-0.3	+6.0	+0.7	-0.7	+0.9	+2.5		+0.4	+0.7	-0.6	+0.6	-2.2	+0.7
Missouri	+4.9	+4.7	-2.4	-3.1	+3.8	+2.7		-0.7	-0.2	+1.9	+2.6	-5.1	+0.7
Montana	+5.9	+1.4	-4.6	+1.0	+2.3	-2.2		-2.3	+1.5	+4.7	-1.4	-1.7	+0.2
Nebraska	-2.4 +1.3	+0.8 -1.6 -0.4 +1.7 -0.5	-5.9 -2.6 -2.7 -2.1 -2.3	-5.3 -2.4 -3.2 -1.7 -2.7	+3.7 +1.0 +4.5 +4.9 -0.5	-0.2 -4.3 -0.1 +1.4 -0.9	-2.0 -1.4 +1.1 +1.8 -0.4	+0.5 -0.7 +3.4 +1.9 +0.9	-0.6 +3.3 +1.1 +1.0 -0.4	+2.2 +3.9 -0.9 -1.0 +1.3	+0.8 -3.8 +0.5 +0.2 -1.0	-1.6 -0.6 -2.6 -3.1 -0.2	-0.2 -1.0 +0.2 +0.6 -0.8
New York North Carolina North Dakota Ohlo Oklahoma	+3.0	0.0	-3.2	-3.3	+6.1	+1. 2	+1.4	+3.1	+1. 1	-1.1	+0.9	-3.8	+0.4
	-0.3	+2.9	-0.9	+0.1	+3.5	+2. 6	-1.4	-1.2	+0. 7	-0.4	-1.6	-4.5	0.0
	+15.1	+1.4	-6.9	-0.7	+4.6	-1. 2	-1.4	-0.9	-0. 4	+4.5	+0.2	+2.3	+1.4
	+3.9	+3.8	-2.0	-1.6	+6.0	+3. 4	+0.6	+1.9	-0. 6	-0.3	+1.1	-5.6	+0.9
	+1,2	+3.8	-2.1	-2.1	+1.0	+2. 0	-0.3	+1.0	-0. 9	+1.4	+2.5	-2.5	+0.4
Oregon Pennsylvania South Carolina South Dakota Tennessee	-1.3 +2.2 -0.3 +9.8 +1.1	-0.5 +1.0 +4.1 -1.0 +5.2	-1.8 -3.1 -0.7 -7.3 +0.1	-1.7 -3.1 -0.3 -3.5 -1.3	$   \begin{array}{r}     -0.1 \\     +5.8 \\     +1.8 \\     +4.5 \\     +3.5   \end{array} $	-2.5 +1.1 +2.7 -1.6 +3.3	-1.6 0.0 -2.0 -2.8 +0.2	-0.8 +1.2 -1.5 -0.9 +0.7	+2.1° -0.6 +1.0 -1.0 +0.2	+3.8 -1.7 -0.4 +2.6 -0.8	-2.8 +0.3 -1.4 -0.1 0.0	-1.3 -5.0 -4.7 +0.2 -4.3	-0.7 -0.2 -0.1 -0.1 +0.7
Texas	-5.3	+3.1 -3.0 +2.5 +1.2 +3.9	-1.4 -4.4 -1.9 -1.8 -2.1	-0.6 -3.5 -0.5 +0.2 -1.0	-0.1 +0.3 +5.2 +0.5 +5.3	+1.0 -4.4 +2.2 0.0 +2.0	+0.8 -0.6 -0.1 +0.7 -0.6	+0.8 +0.3 -0.3 -0.8 +0.4	-1.3 +1.5 0.0 +3.1 -1.3	-0.3 +3.8 -0.7 +4.3 -1.0	+0.6 -1.2 -0.8 +0.2 -0.7	-2.7 +1.7 -4.3 -2.1 -5.2	-0.1 -1.2 +0.2 +0.6 0.0
Wisconsin	+10.4	+4.3	-2.9	-3.0	+4.4	+2.3	-1.0	+2.3	+0.6	+0.6	+5.6	-2.6	+1.8
	-1.0	-0.6	-3.8	-0.6	+2.6	-2.2	-1.7	+0.1	+0.6	+3.9	-0.9	-1.9	-0.5

Table 2.—Percentage of normal precipitation, 1944

2. 2 Growing of not may precipitation, 1944													
State	January	February	March	April	Мау	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Annual
Alabama	73	135	184	209	74	65	76	137	147	21	116	77	113
	63	193	115	151	175	18	56	66	120	76	188	91	102
	57	210	131	138	133	75	70	138	- 55	38	120	191	115
	65	139	51	119	76	161	114	22	17	99	238	70	100
	143	73	138	195	118	65	103	43	31	87	145	89	101
Florida	90	52	177	142	74	78	126	110	90	141	70	28	101
Georgia	92	135	216	188	62	60	82	94	119	86	94	50	108
Idaho	42	84	57	159	76	237	59	50	95	49	115	65	90
Illinois	24	124	135	189	104	62	57	113	82	48	70	78	93
Indiana	19	117	116	174	110	47	51	118	73	42	80	70	86
Iowa Kansas Kentucky Louisiana Maryland and Delaware	36 154	103 122 130 104 82	150 206 117 124 152	165 287 118 107 116	152 102 92 164 61	136 75 41 44 79	106 151 47 52 56	164 180 145 137 82	60 70 133 105 143	50 92 51 36 112	105 152 71 204 135	115 256 96 117 108	121 142 89 112 100
Michigan	82	86	134	89	93	135	99	86	118	44	101	76	95
Minnesota		101	103	94	166	163	126	162	103	20	148	29	120
Mississippi		152	167	142	125	42	77	130	103	30	143	132	114
Missouri		148	118	171	94	55	74	160	71	60	87	105	98
Montana		83	99	81	96	209	66	154	90	23	90	67	104
Nebraska	263	128	144	200	118	121	129	118	42	58	199	60	124
Nevada	83	139	66	142	52	218	. 18	0	44	55	291	45	97
New England	48	78	111	106	41	147	82	47	164	82	140	93	95
New Jersey	96	67	149	149	45	106	31	59	207	67	203	85	102
New Mexico	125	73	48	115	91	75	96	110	105	125	145	116	101
New York North Carolina North Dakota Ohio Oklahoma	56	84	111	129	83	121	69	60	134	74	108	111	95
	95	157	172	124	76	50	109	71	180	94	128	72	108
	76	59	108	.56	124	186	70	224	100	12	388	12	128
	31	97	140	132	104	80	44	118	65	57	75	107	88
	117	209	138	121	91	99	109	115	89	95	136	153	114
Oregon Pennsylvania South Carolina South Dakota Tennessee	52	82	57	121	66	170	105	35	93	55	92	43	74
	65	68	134	117	111	109	56	61	111	99	97	122	95
	102	143	231	147	58	63	102	58	91	126	94	41	102
	229	114	77	95	121	159	141	169	62	59	319	43	129
	53	215	128	121	77	51	48	114	235	52	91	134	109
Texas	195	147	128	69	178	58	64	173	91	55	154	152	119
Utah	136	91	155	248	103	388	31	18	31	46	186	79	118
Virginia	81	156	151	91	77	56	75	79	243	108	105	88	106
Washington	67	77	62	115	86	84	29	51	130	52	97	37	73
West Virginia	57	116	135	125	106	95	58	72	136	143	80	145	103
Wisconsin	67	101	112	96	103	153	71	104	85	24	131	58	95
Wyoming	104	99	137	135	102	217	106	21	74	54	160	95	112



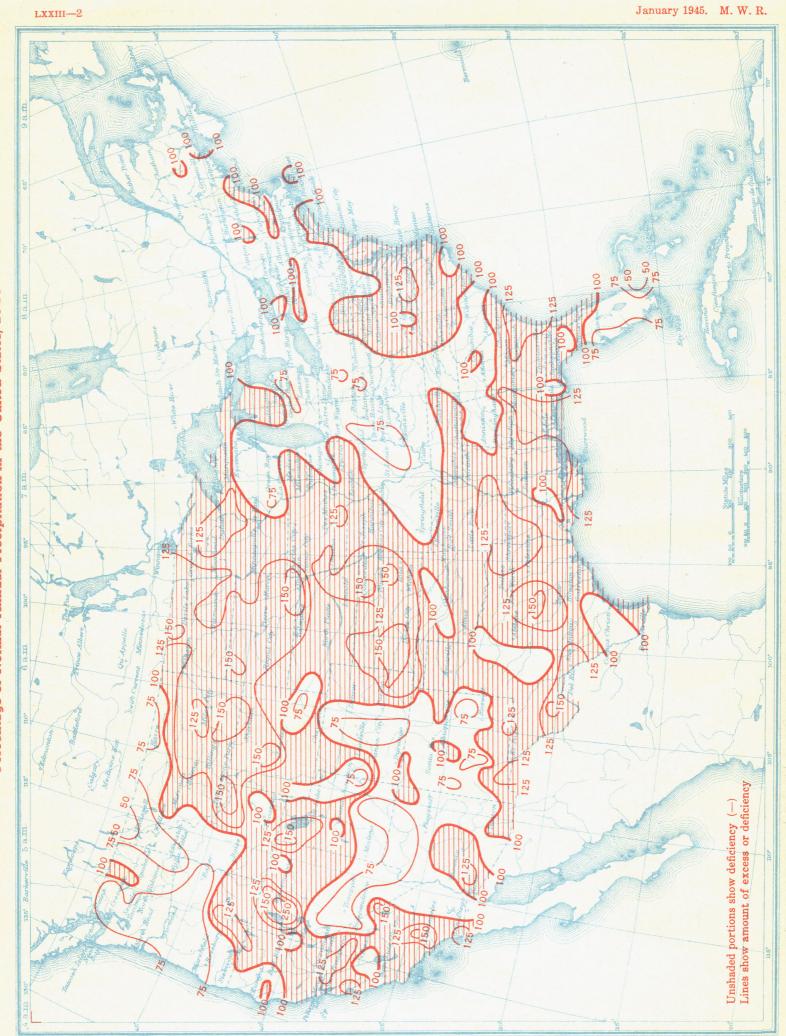


Table 3.—Monthly and annual precipitation (inches), 1944

State	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Annual
Alabama	3. 62	7. 21	10. 77	9. 29	2. 89	2. 80	4. 21	6. 42	4. 79	0. 56	3. 70	3. 76	60. 0
Arizona	0. 79	2. 58	1. 18	0. 86	0. 56	0. 06	1. 18	1. 50	1. 54	0. 62	1. 77	1. 17	13. 8
Arkansas	2. 50	7. 34	6. 13	6. 65	6. 42	3. 04	2. 61	4. 90	1. 84	1. 13	4. 70	7. 86	55. 1:
California	3. 14	6. 04	1. 85	2. 02	0. 76	0. 50	0. 08	. 0. 02	0. 08	1. 21	5. 49	2. 82	24. 0
Colorado	1. 13	0. 71	1. 78	3. 47	2. 17	0. 91	2. 25	0. 83	0. 42	0. 98	1. 13	0. 79	16. 5
Florida	2. 50	1. 63	5. 58	4. 06	2. 96	5. 25	9. 26	7. 72	6. 04	5. 84	1, 55	0. 78	53, 17
Georgia	3. 97	6. 61	10. 59	6. 86	2. 15	2. 68	4. 83	4. 95	4. 40	2. 34	2, 48	2. 08	53, 94
(daho	0. 93	1. 47	1. 03	2. 29	1. 21	3. 18	0. 38	0. 30	0. 97	0. 71	2, 24	1. 38	16, 09
Illinois	0. 57	2. 44	4. 27	6. 51	4. 19	2. 42	1. 82	3. 78	2. 98	1. 22	1, 86	1. 66	33, 72
Indiana	0. 62	2. 85	4. 31	6. 20	4. 39	1. 80	1. 68	4. 00	2. 44	1. 13	2, 45	1. 95	33, 82
owa	1. 06	1. 10	2. 58	4. 55	6. 13	5. 88	3. 73	5. 88	2. 25	1. 08	1. 73	1. 29	37. 26
Kansas	1. 09	1. 22	2. 96	7. 25	3. 90	2. 93	4. 73	5. 63	1. 92	1. 73	1. 96	2. 15	37. 47
Kentucky	1. 60	4. 59	5. 50	4. 73	3. 62	1. 70	1. 93	5. 45	3. 88	1. 31	2. 45	3. 62	40. 38
Jouisiana	7. 50	4. 66	5. 75	4. 99	7. 33	2. 16	3. 17	7. 08	4. 02	1. 16	7. 88	6. 09	61. 79
Maryland and Delaware	3. 35	2. 60	5. 63	4. 14	2. 29	3. 04	2. 47	3. 59	4. 91	3. 36	3. 57	3. 34	42. 29
Michigan Minnesota Uississippi Mississippi Missouri Montana	1. 17	1. 52	2. 76	2. 13	2. 98	4. 16	2. 68	2, 39	3. 74	1. 17	2. 53	1. 58	28. 81
	0. 60	- 0. 77	1. 19	2. 01	5. 22	6. 50	4. 13	5, 14	2. 02	0. 36	1. 69	0. 23	29. 86
	4. 25	7. 46	9. 44	6. 99	5. 37	1. 81	3. 84	5, 42	3. 13	0. 78	5. 18	6. 97	60. 64
	0. 63	3. 10	3. 78	6. 68	4. 44	2. 55	2. 62	6, 09	2. 82	1. 68	2. 34	2. 26	38. 99
	0. 30	0. 59	0. 93	0. 92	1. 98	5. 35	0. 94	1, 63	1. 18	0. 23	0. 82	0. 58	15. 45
Jebraska Jevada Iew England Jew Hersey Jew Mexico	1. 37	0. 91	1. 58	4. 76	3. 88	4. 26	3. 81	3. 26	0. 85	0. 80	1, 51	0. 39	27, 38
	1. 01	1. 46	0. 64	1. 09	0. 44	1. 07	0. 07	T	0. 19	0. 33	1, 86	0. 45	8, 61
	1. 72	2. 50	4. 06	3. 59	1. 38	5. 05	3. 08	1. 79	6. 23	2. 85	4, 86	3. 12	40, 23
	3. 50	2. 38	5. 68	5. 45	1. 67	4. 08	1. 44	2. 79	7. 93	2. 41	6, 44	3. 02	46, 79
	0. 74	0. 53	0. 36	0. 99	1. 05	0. 94	2. 37	2. 62	1. 82	1. 39	0, 96	0. 81	14, 58
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